

Leo Raudys, Director
Regional Environmental Management Division
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-4194

Dear Mr. Raudys:

On August 9, 2005, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) received a letter from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) requesting approval of the proposed variance from meeting water quality standards for the Mesabi Nugget LLC. The proposed action would grant the Mesabi Nugget facility (Permit MN0067687) a variance from meeting the hardness, total dissolved solids (salts), specific conductivity and bicarbonates water quality standards for the protection of agricultural and industrial water supply uses applicable to Second Creek in St. Louis County, Minnesota. The August 9, 2005, letter documents the MPCA Citizen Board approval of the variance request based on Minnesota Rule Parts 7050.0190, Subpart 1, and 7000.7000 Subpart 2.

Federal regulations of 40 CFR 131.21 require USEPA review and approval of State water quality standards. USEPA has reviewed the information submitted in support of the proposed variance and hereby approves the proposed variance and permit variance conditions submitted by the State of Minnesota pursuant to Section 303 of the Clean Water Act and Federal regulations at 40 CFR 131.21. If you or your staff has any questions regarding this approval, please contact David Pfeifer of my staff. Mr. Pfeifer may be reached at (312) 353-9024.

Very truly yours,

Jo Lynn Traub
Director, Water Division

cc: Richard Clark, MPCA
Gary Kimball, MPCA

bcc: Peter Swenson, NPDES Branch
George Azevedo, NPDES Branch

C:\ACHICO_WORK\Water Quality Branch\05_Correspondence\Mesabi_draftapproval_082605.doc